

# Cycling advocate pleads for district to add options

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Chris Hennessey of the Maple Ridge bicycle advisory committee wants council to think every time they drive somewhere about whether there's a safe option for cyclists and if they'd let their children or grandchildren cycle where they're going. Hennessey made a presentation Tuesday evening and pointed out Maple Ridge still has a long way to go before it's a safe, accessible community for cyclists with only 25.9 kilometres of dedicated on-street bike lanes and 8.1 kilometres of shared bike traffic lanes.

"We look for your leadership to continue to push this mandate to the forefront," said Hennessey. However, progress is

being made with new bike lanes going in with new construction.

Currently the district is working on a "1-2-3" route that will connect some of the existing lanes together into a 10-kilometre long east west corridor, allowing commuters to get safely through the community.

Hennessey said there are a few important gaps that need to be filled soon, including from Lougheed at 220 Street to Laity Street, from 210 Street and 128 Avenue and Neaves to Laity.

The area between Neaves and Laity is popular for out of town cyclists but there needs to be proper bike lanes, he said.

"It really needs to be addressed," he said.

Hennessey is excited about how accessible the new Golden Ears Bridge is



Maria Rantanen/TIMES

## The new cycling path next to the Golden Ears Bridge

for cyclists.

"I think it's symbolic the first citizen who crossed it did it on bicycle," he said, adding around 1,000 people cycled across the bridge during the bridge

celebration.

He's also thrilled about the fact that the District of Maple Ridge now has a Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition chapter, indicating there is a strong interest in

promoting cycling here.

The bicycle advisory committee's goal is to create bike lanes that are completely separate from cars for safety purposes and they want to get people to start cycling to and from places they're going in Maple Ridge.

For example, Hennessey said more kids could bike to and from school and people commuting via the West Coast Express could cycle to the station or people could cycle to and from errands.

Hennessey gave some statistics about how cycling is much more dangerous for North American cyclists than European cyclists.

For example, North American cyclists are 7 to 70 times more likely to be injured per kilometre travelled than European cyclists.

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